



February 2, 2005

Michael Johanns
Secretary
Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We would like to convey our concerns regarding the USDA's January 4, 2005 final rule to open the U.S. market to Canadian beef imports since the initial discovery of the "Mad Cow" (BSE) disease in May 2003. While we believe that resumption of beef trade between Canada and the U.S. should progress, the final rule will adversely affect the beef industry in Idaho and the nation.

Larry E. Craig
United States Senator
520 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Administration must implement a policy that protects the safety of consumers and preserves the economic vitality of all sectors of our domestic industry. The final rule is misleading by prohibiting importation of live Canadian cows over thirty months of age, but permitting imports of meat from these same animals. This provision not only sends mixed signals to consumers and the international community, but also unfairly discriminates among those in the U.S. beef industry.

Mike Crapo
United States Senator
239 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

We commend you for your recent aggressive efforts to open foreign markets to U.S. beef exports. However, implementation of the final rule without re-establishment of these crucial markets could devastate U.S. producers who are just beginning to experience profitability after years of continual losses. Without time-definite assurances from our foreign trading partners to resume beef trade, our domestic market will be burdened with an oversupply of slaughter cattle and boxed beef without export outlets.

Mike Simpson
Member of Congress
1339 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

As you know, the beef industry is a vital sector of Idaho and our nation's agricultural economy. It is important that the U.S. and Canada continue to work together to address the issue of BSE. However, we believe that implementation of the USDA's final rule will inflict significant economic harm on the beef industry in Idaho and the nation.


C.L. "Butch" Otter
Member of Congress
1711 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

We appreciate your prompt consideration, and look forward to working with you to further address this matter.

Sincerely,


LARRY E. CRAIG
United States Senator


MIKE CRAPO
United States Senator


MIKE SIMPSON
Member of Congress


C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER
Member of Congress